A True Tale of *ROBIN HOOD*.

Or, A Brief Touch of the Life and Death of that renowned Outlaw *Robert* Earl of *Huntington*, vulgarly called *Robin Hood*, who lived and dyed in A. D. 1198. being the 9th. year of the Reign of King *Richard* the Firſt, commonly called *Richard Cœur de Lyon*.

Carefully collected out of the trueſt Writers of our Engliſh Chronicles: And publiſhed for the ſatisfaction of thoſe who deſire truth from falſhood.

By *Martin Parker*.

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BIBLIOTECA

A TRUE TALE OF Robin Hood.

BOth Gentlemen & Yeamen bold
of whatsoever you are,
To have a Nately New told
attention now prepare:
It is a Tale of Robin Hood,
that I to you will tell,
Which being rightly understood,
I know will please you well.
This Robin (so much talked on)
was once a man of Fame,
Intitled Earl of Huntingron,
Lord Robert Hood by Name.
In Courtship and Magnificence
his Carriage won him praise,

And greater favour with his Prince
than any in our days.
In bounteous Liberality
he too much did excell,
And loved men of Quality
more than exceeding well:
His great Revenues all he sold
for Wine and costly chear,
He kept three hundred Bow-men bold,
by shooting lov'd so dear:
No Archer living in his time
with him might well compare:
He practis'd all his youthful prime
that Mistresse most rare.
At last by his profuse expence
he had consum'd his wealth;
And being outlawed by his Prince,
in Woods he liv'd by stealth.
The Abbot of St. Maries rich,
to whom he money ought,
His hatred to the Earl was such,
that he his downfall wrought:
So being outlawed (as it is told)
he with a Crew went forth
Of lusty Gamsters stout and bold,
and robbed in the North.
Among the rest one Little John
a yeoman bold and free,

Who

Cargo bound (it is well known)
with rare encounter thine.
One hundred men in all he got,
with whom (the story says)
Three hundred common men durst not
hold combat any ways.
They York-shire woods frequented much
and Lancashire also,
Wherein their pranks were such,
that they worthy of memory were.
None Rich durst travel to and fro,
though ne'r so strongly arm'd,
But by their Knaves (as strong in bone)
they still were rob'd and harm'd.
His chiefest plight for Clergy was
that liv'd in monstrous pride,
For one of them he would let pass
along the high-way side.
But first they must to dinner go,
and afterwards to shrift;
Full many a one he served so
thus while he liv'd by Theft.
No Monks nor Friers he wouldst let go,
without paying their fees:
If they thought much to be used so,
their Stones he made them leese.
For such as they the Country fill'd
with Barkards in those days:

Which to prevent, these Sparks did gather
all that came in their ways.
But Robin Hood so gentle was,
and bore so brave a mind,
If any in distress did pass,
to them he was so kind,
That he would give and lend to them
to help them in their need;
This made all poor men pray for him
and wish he well might speed.
The Widow and the Fatherless
he would lend means unto:
And those whom famine did oppress
found him a friendly foe.
Nor would he do a woman wrong,
but ere her sute can dye,
He would protect with power strong
all those who cravd his aid:
The Abbot of St. Maries then
who him unaid before,
Was riding with two hundred men,
and Gold and Silver store:
But Robin Hood upon him set,
with his courageous Sparks,
And all the Coyn perforce did get,
which was twelve thousand Marks;
He bound the Abbot to a Tree,
and would not let him pass,

Before that to his men and he
his Lordship had said Wals:
Which being done, upon his Horse
he set him fast astride.
And with his face towards his Arse
he forced him to ride.
His men were forced to be his guide,
for he rode backward home:
The Abbot being thus vilify'd,
did sorely shame and fume.
Thus Robin Hood did vindicate
his former wrongs receiv'd:
For 'twas this covetous Prelate
that him of Land bereav'd.
The Abbot he rode to the King
with all the haste he could:
And to his Grace he every thing
exactly did unfold:
And said that if no course were ta'n
by force or stratagem,
To take this Rebel and his Train,
no man should pass for them.
The King protested by and by
unto the Abbot then
That Robin Hood with speed should dye,
with all his merry men.
But e're the King did any send,
he did another feat:

Whilst

Which did his Grace much more offend,
the fact indeed was great:
For in a short time after that
the Kings Receivers went
Towards London with the coyn they got,
for his Highness Northern Rent;
Bold Robin Hood and Little John,
with the rest of their Train,
(Not dreading Law) set them upon,
and did their Gold obtain.
The King much moved at the same,
and the Abbots talk also,
In that his anger did proclaim,
and sent word to and fro,
That whosoever alive or dead
could bring him Robin Hood,
Should have one thousand marks well paid
in Gold and Silver good.
This promise of the King did make
full many Men resolved bold
Attempt stout Robin Hood to take
with all the force they could;
But still when any came to him
within the gay green wood,
He entertainment gave to them
with Venison fat and good.
And shew'd to them such Martial sport,
with his long Bow and Arrow,

That

That the poor him did give relief,
how that he was great sorrow
That such a worthy man as he
should thus be put to pain.
Being a late Lord of high degree,
of living quite bereft.
The King to take him over sea sent
sent men of mickle might.
But he and his still beat them back,
and conquered them in fight;
Or else with love and courtesie,
to him he won their hearts.
Thus still he liv'd by Robbery
throughout the Northern parts.
And all the Country stood in dread
of Robin Hood and's men.
For stouter Lads ne'r trod by bread
in those days, nor since then;
The Abbot (which before I nam'd)
sought all the means he could,
To have by force this Rebel ta'n
and his Adherents bold.
Therefore he arm'd five hundred men
with furniture compleat;
But the Outlaws slew half of them,
and made the rest retreat.
The long Bow and the Arrow keen,
they were so us'd unto.

That

That still he kept the Forrest green
in spight o' th proudest foe,
Twelve of the Abbots men he took
who came to have him ta'n,
When all the rest the field forsook,
these he did entertain.
With banquetting and merriment,
and having us'd them well,
He to their Lord them safely sent
and will'd them him to tell,
That if he would be pleas'd at last
to beg of our good King,
That he might pardon what was past,
and him to favour bring,
He would surrender back again
the money which before
Was taken by him and s men
from him and many more.
Poor men might safely pass by him,
and some that way would chuse,
For well they knew that to help them
he evermore did use.
But where he knew a Miser rich
that did the poor oppress,
To feel his Coyn his hands did itch,
he'd have it more or less:
And sometimes when the High-way fail'd,
then he his courage rouzes;

He

He and his men have oft times
such rich men in their houses,
So that through dread of Robin then
and his adventurous Crews,
The Pilots kept great hosts of men,
which else maintain'd his Foes.
King Richard of that name the first,
Surnamed Coeur de Lyon,
Went to defeat the Pagans Curst,
who kept the Coasts of Sion,
The Bishop of Ely Chancellor,
was left a Vice-Roy here,
Who like a Potent Emperor
did proudly dominere.
Our Chronicles of him report
that commonly he rode
With a thousand horse from court to court,
where he would make abode.
He riding down towards the North
with his aforesaid Train,
Robin and his did issue forth,
them all to entertain.
And with the gallant gray-Eagle-wing
they shew'd to them such play
That made their Horses kick and fling
and down their Riders lay.
Full glad and fain the Bishop was,
for all his thousand men,

To

To seek what passage he could to passe
from out [illegible]
Two hundred of his men were left
and fourteene lyes good
Thirty who in captivity yield
were carried to the greenwood
Which after ransomed were
for twenty marks a man
The rest set
to th' Town of Warrington
The Bishop [illegible] enraged then
did in King Richards name
Muster up a power of [illegible]
these Outlaws hold to task
But Robin [illegible] his coat reclaim
so won the meaner sort
That they were loath him to try
what rigour did impose
So that bold Robin and his Train
did live unhurt of them
Until King Richard came again
from fair Jerusalem
And then the talk of Robin Hood
his Royal Ears did fill
His Grace admir'd that th' greenwood
he was contented still:
So they the Country fare and near
did give him great applause

For none of them need stand in fear,
but they the Laws broke.
He wished well unto the King,
and prayed still for his health,
And never meant any thing
against the Common-wealth;
Only because he was undone
by th' cruel Clergy then,
All means that he could think upon
to vex such kind of men,
He enterpris'd with hateful spleen,
for which he was to blame,
For fault of some to wreak his teen
on all that by him came.
With wealth that he by Roguery got,
eight Abbies he built,
Thinking thereby to purge the blot
of blood wherein he had spilt.
Such was their blind Devotion then,
depending on their works,
Which if it were true, we Christian men
Interdour were to Turks.
But to speak true of Robin Hood,
and wrong him not a jot,
He never would shed any mans blood
that him invaded not.
For would he injure husbandmen
that toil at Carts and Plough,

For

For well he knew wer't not for them,
to live no man knew how.
The King in person with some Lords
to Nottingham did ride.
To try what strength and skill affords
to crush this Outlaws pride.
And as he once before had done,
he did again proclaim,
That whosoever would take upon
to bring to Nottingham
Or any place within the Land
Rebellious Robin Hood,
Should be preferr'd in place to stand
with those of Noble Blood.
When Robin Hood heard of the same,
within a little space,
Into the Town of Nottingham
a Letter to his Grace
He shot upon an Arrow head
one evening cunningly:
Which was brought to the King even
before his Majesty:
The Tenour of this Letter was,
that Robin should submit,
And be true Liegeman to his Grace
in any thing that's fit,
So that his Highness would forgive
him and his merry men all:

If not, he must (th' grant) wod live
and take what chance did fall.
The King would feign have pardoned him
but that some Lords did say,
This President will much condemn
your Grace another day.
While that the King and Lords did stay
debating on this thing,
Some of their Outlaws fled away
unto the Scottish King.
For they supposed if he were ta'n,
or to the King did yield,
By th' Commons all the rest of's train
full quickly would be quell'd.
Of more than full an hundred men,
but forty tarried still,
Who were resolv'd to stick to him,
let Fortune work her will.
If none had fled, all for his sake
had got their pardon free:
The King to favour meant to take
his merry men and he.
But e're the pardon to him came
this famous Archer dy'd;
His death and manner of the same
I'le presently describe.
For being bent to think upon
his followers revolt,

In melancholly passion
he did recount his fault:
Perfidious Traytor, said he then,
in all your dangers past
Have I you guarded as my men
to leave me thus at last;
This sad perplexity did cause
a Feaver (as some say)
Which him unto consumption drews
though by a stranger way.
This deadly danger to prevent,
he hie'd him with all speed
Unto a Nunnery with intent
for his healths sake to bleed.
A faithless Fryer did pretend
in lobe to let him blood:
But he by's slyness wrought the end
of famous Robin Hood.
The Fryer (as some say) did this
to vindicate the wrong
Which to the Clergy he and his
had done by power strong.
Thus died he by treachery,
that could not dye by force:
Had he liv'd longer certainly
King Richard in remorse
Had unto favour him receiv'd,
he have men elevated

His

'Tis pitty he was of life bereav'd
by one which he so lov'd;
A treacherous Leach this Fryer was,
to let him bleed to death:
And Robin was nothings an Ass
to trust him with his breath.
His Corps the Priorels of the place
the next day that he dy'd,
Caused to be buried (in mean case)
close by the High-way side.
And over him she caused a stone
to be set on the ground,
An Epitaph was set thereon,
wherein his name was found,
The date o'th' year and day also,
she made to be set there:
That all who by the way did go,
might see it plain appear.
That such a man as Robin Hood
was buried in that place;
And how he lived in the green-wood,
and robb'd there for a space.
It seems that though the Clergy he
had put to much spite,
He could not quite forgotten be,
although he was their foe;
This woman though she did him hate,
yet loved his memory:

And thought it wondrous pitty that
his fame should with him dye,
This Epitaph, as Records tell,
within this hundred years
By many was discerned well,
but time all things out-wears.
His followers when he was dead,
were some reputed to grace;
The rest to forreign Countries fled,
and left their native place.
Although his Funeral was but mean,
this woman had in mind,
Least his fame should be buried clean
from those that came behind.
For certainly before nor since
no man e're understood
Under the Reign of any Prince,
of one like Robin Hood.
Full thirteen years and something more
these Outlaws lived thus;
Feared of the Rich, loved of the Poor,
a thing most marvellous.
A thing impossible to us
this story seems to be:
None dares be now so venturous,
but times are chang'd we see.
We that live in these later days
of civil government,

If need be, have an hundred ways
such Outlaws to prevent.
In those days men more barbarous were,
and lived less in awe;
Now (God be thanked) people fear
more to offend the Law.
No roaring Guns were then in use,
they dreamt of no such thing:
Our English men in fight did use
the gallant gray-Goose wing;
In which activity these men
(through practise) were so good,
That in those days none equal'd them,
(especially Robin Hood,)
So that it seems keeping in Caves,
in Woods and Forests thick,
They'd beat a multitude with ease,
their Arrows did so prick;
And none durst neer unto them come,
unless in courtesie;
All such he gladly would send home,
with mirth and jollity;
Which courtesie won him such love,
as I before have told,
'Twas the chief cause that he did prove
more prosperous than he could.
Let us be thankful for these times
of plenty, truth and peace;

And

And leave our great and horrid crimes,
least they cauls this to ceale,
I know there's many feigned Tales
of Robin Hood and's Crew,
But Chronicles which seldome fails
reports this to be true:
Let none then think this is a Lye,
for if 'twere put to th' worst,
They may the truth of all descry
i' th' Reign of Richard the first,
If any Reader please to try
as Direction show,
The truth of this brave History,
he'l find it true I know.
And I shall think my labour well
bestow'd, to purpose good,
When't shall be said that I did tell
true Tales of Robin Hood.

The Epitaph which the Prior of the Monastry of Kirkslay *in* York shire *set over* Robin Hood, *which (as is before mentioned) was to be read within these hundred years, though in old broken English, much to the same sence and meaning.*

Decembris Quarto Die, 1198. Anno Regni Richardi primi 9.

Robert

Robert Earl of Huntington
Lies under this little stone,
No Archer was like him so good;
His wildness named him Robin Hood;
Full thirteen years and something more
These Northern parts he vexed sore;
Such Outlaws as he and his men
May England never know again.

Some other superstitious words were in, which I thought fit to leave out.

Finis.